

but they also surveyed for timber, water supply, grazing possibilities, and the altitude of the mountain peaks.<sup>2</sup>

One such exploration was undertaken by a company composed of Robert and William Gardner and J. D. Parks. In September of 1852 they followed up the Weber River to its headwaters and from thence down the Provo River looking for timber and investigating the river for the purpose of floating logs down to the central settlements. William Gardner kept an account of their travels, and his description of the Provo Valley was the chief factor in opening up the region six years later. After describing the great amount of timber in the upper valleys of the Weber and Provo Rivers, he tells of following the road some twelve or fifteen miles down the Provo River to a valley seven by ten miles in extent with two large streams coming from the south into it.

Our attention was attracted by mounds about the size of a coal pit to one that appeared to be about a mile off, and which we judged to be about a quarter of a mile across and sixty feet high. They all are about the shape of a coal pit, perfectly hollow. We supposed them to be a volcano as the surface of the ground for some miles was covered with this light stone the same as the mounds, but finding some of them full of water we concluded that the formation was made by the water.<sup>3</sup>

After exploring this now famous landmark and noting that the valley could be easily irrigated they passed on to within about five miles of the mouth of the Provo Canyon. Gardner notes that the distance from their camp to the valley that connected the Provo and Weber Rivers was about twenty-five or thirty miles and a road could easily be built all the way. His description of the canyon and the river are especially significant.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>3</sup>Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, MSS, (L. D. S. Historian's Office Library, Salt Lake City, Utah), September 13, 1852. Hereafter cited as Journal History.

*Names of  
Timpanogas  
Valley*

We continued the journey down to Utah Valley and noticed two large streams coming in on the south and one on the north. The last ten miles travel was pretty rough, but a good road could be built without much trouble by cutting into the side hill at different points, only loose rock being in the way and the Provo River is as handsome a stream for floating purposes as could be desired, it is not so rapid as the Weber River and the channel is deeper, but it's pretty rough at the mouth of the canyon, which is the best canyon for a road that I have ever seen, having fine narrow valleys with rich soil and good pasture. At the present time I think that there is more water in this river than in the Weber River. A continuation of settlements from the mouth of the Weber around to the mouth of the Provo, a distance of about 120 miles, could easily be made. From the mouth of the Weber to the headwaters of the same the distance must be about 100 miles. Good roads could be made without much expense except the last ten miles and the streams can also be utilized pretty well for floating down timber.<sup>4</sup>

This was not the first time the region had been visited. Gardner called the valley of the cones William's Valley because a party of that name had camped there some five years before.<sup>5</sup> The significance of the Gardner expedition is that it was undertaken with the intent to explore the valley for timber and possible colonization. The suggestions he made were followed when the time came to open up the area.

The settlement of Utah Valley preceded that of Provo Valley and most of the early settlers in Provo Valley were originally residents of the former. The first settlers to Provo were sent out as early as April 1849.<sup>6</sup> By 1852 such settlements as Lehi, Fort Alpine,

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ray Colton, "A Historical Study of the Exploration of Utah Valley and the True Story of Fort Utah," (Unpublished Master's thesis, Dept. of History, Brigham Young University, 1935), p. 56.

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Pleasant Grove, Springville, Spanish Fork, Payson, and Santaquin were growing communities in and near Utah Valley.<sup>7</sup> Thus, by the time the first settlements in Provo Valley were made, communities in the surrounding region were well established.

The settlements in Provo Valley were typical of Latter-day Saint settlements throughout the Great Basin, and it would therefore seem necessary to outline briefly the role of the Mormon Church in Utah at this time.

The migration of the Mormons to Mexican territory had been under the direction of the Church, and it was only natural that the Church should continue the supervision of colonization and settlement of the pioneers. Brigham Young, as president of the Church, together with the Council of the Twelve Apostles, administered affairs until the necessary civil and ecclesiastical machinery could be established for the new-born communities. The Church leaders continued to plant colonies long after the organization of Utah as a United States territory in 1850.

The groups who went out were usually provided with a bishop as the leader. In the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints the bishop is the head of an ecclesiastical unit known as a ward. The ward in turn is composed of family groups living in close proximity to one another. All over Utah, cities were built, lands divided off to the people, roads and bridges made, water ditches cut, and land irrigated and society governed under the immediate control of the bishops.<sup>8</sup> The bishop also had judicial functions and early in Utah history adjusted disputes among Church members and in some cases among non-members.

By the time the first settlements were made in what was later to be Wasatch County, Utah had been made a

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>8</sup>Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 366: "By 1878 some 358 colonies had been established under this system."

territory. A rather turbulent period followed in which some of the federal territorial appointees, seeking political advantage, made charges of treason and other crimes against the Mormons in Utah. Finally, in 1857 President Buchanan, fearful of the linkage of the Mormon practice of polygamy with the Democratic Party's issue of popular sovereignty, appointed Alfred Cumming as governor of Utah Territory and sent a *posse comitatus* consisting of United States' troops to see that he reached his destination.

Brigham Young, distrustful of the motives for sending such a force, prepared the Saints for the defense of their lives and liberties by calling out the Utah militia and ordering an evacuation of the members living in the Salt Lake Valley. It was only under the skillful mediation of Thomas L. Kane that an understanding was reached by which Governor Cumming entered Salt Lake City while the body of troops passed through to Cedar Valley some thirty-six miles south of Salt Lake City, where they established Camp Floyd early in July of 1858.

It is at this point that the series of events which culminated in the development of Provo Valley and the establishment of Wasatch County began.



## UPON THE MOUNTAINS

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## CHAPTER TWO

### *...And There Was Life in the Valley*

Winter in the mountains and valleys of Deseret was a test of faith and stamina for the pioneer Saints. Snows and bitter, blowing winds came early and lasted long. In the high valleys of the Wasatch the frosts were heavy in September and snows were on the ground in October. Spring sunshine rarely melted the earth's snow crust until late March or April, leaving only about five summer months to prepare for cold, ice and snow all over again.

Anxieties about the weather were sharply accentuated for some 11 pioneer families in Utah Valley during the winter of 1858-59, for they were making plans to move into new homes high in the Wasatch mountains when Spring came.

The road through Provo Canyon had been finished before the snows fell and a bridge spanned the Provo River. With the decision made to move into the valley, they spent the short days and long, crisp winter nights in building furniture and making clothes. Plows had to be sharpened and harrows made ready for the sagebrush and soil of the new country. Wagons had to be repaired and those who lacked teams had to acquire them.

William Meeks was appointed leader of the group and they met frequently under his direction to ask the Lord to bless them in their preparations. Their constant prayer was that the elements would be tempered so they could mature crops and sustain themselves and their families in the new country.

Spring came late in 1859 and it was the last day of April before the group of 11 men with their three wagons and teams of oxen could leave Provo.

Families of the men had agreed to remain behind in Provo until log cabins could be built and other preparations made for their coming. Tearfully, the wives and children stood by that April morning as they watched their husbands and fathers start out toward Provo Canyon and a new life.

Facing the uncertainties of the venture were Thomas Rasband, John Crook, Charles N. Carroll, John Carlile, John Jordan, Henry Chatwin, Jesse Bond, James Carlile, William Giles Jr., William Carpenter and George Carlile.

Winter and the forces of nature had played havoc with the road in many places and traveling was slow. In addition, several snowslides blocked the route, making the journey hazardous as well as exhausting.



The only written record of the trip that has been preserved was in the journal of John Crook. He wrote:

"April 30, 1859, we camped at a snowslide in Provo Canyon that night. The next morning we pulled our wagons to pieces and carried them to the top of the snowslide which was about a quarter of a mile wide. Our May Day excursion consisted of traveling on up the canyon from the snowslide to William Wall's ranch where we camped. The next day we crossed Daniels' Creek on the ice. There were heavy drifts of snow behind the willow bushes. We thought we were the first settlers to arrive in the valley that Spring, but when we reached the present site of Heber we saw two teams plowing north of us which proved to be William Davidson plowing with two yoke of oxen and Robert Broadhead and James Davis with a similar outfit between them. We found that William Davidson had his family here, which I believe was the first family in the valley."

Exchanging greetings with the men whom they found already in the valley, the group went on to a spring about a mile north of the present site of Heber. They made their camp here, as John Crook notes in his journal, because this was considered the best land in the valley. As their camp was the largest in the valley and most of them originally had come from Great Britain, they called it London. The spring by which they camped still retains that name.

The first order of business was for each man to claim his section of land, either 20 or 40 acres, and begin as quickly as possible to prepare the ground for planting. Much of the earth was covered with sagebrush, which proved very thick and hard to clear. Yet with a prayer in their hearts and a song of faith on their lips they cleared away the brush and planted not only the seeds of new crops but also the seeds of new homes and a new valley for themselves and those they loved.

As the crops were being planted the men camped in tents or in the wagons, but they soon spent some of their time in laying out a townsite and building log houses. They decided to build closer together in a fort so they could protect themselves from Indians if that became necessary. They selected the northwest corner of the townsite for the fort string of huts.

About the middle of June, 1859, Jesse Fuller, deputy county surveyor of Utah County, commenced a survey of the London townsite. The initial point was established at the north end of what is now Main Street. The first line was run along the west side of Main Street, the blocks being made 24 rods square and the streets five rods wide. Each block was divided into four lots, 12 rods square. A tract of eight blocks south and five and one-half blocks west of the initial point was laid off into blocks and lots forming a rectangle about three-fourths of a mile long and one-half mile wide. This formed the west half of the townsite. The east half was similarly laid off some months later, leaving Main Street seven rods wide.

## 500 North

300 West

- |                          |               |                          |                |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> | Robert Par    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Joseph Lord    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | John Ruse     | <input type="checkbox"/> | Porter Dow     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | John Murdo    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Thomas Todd    |
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Old Fort Heber shown there in 1859.

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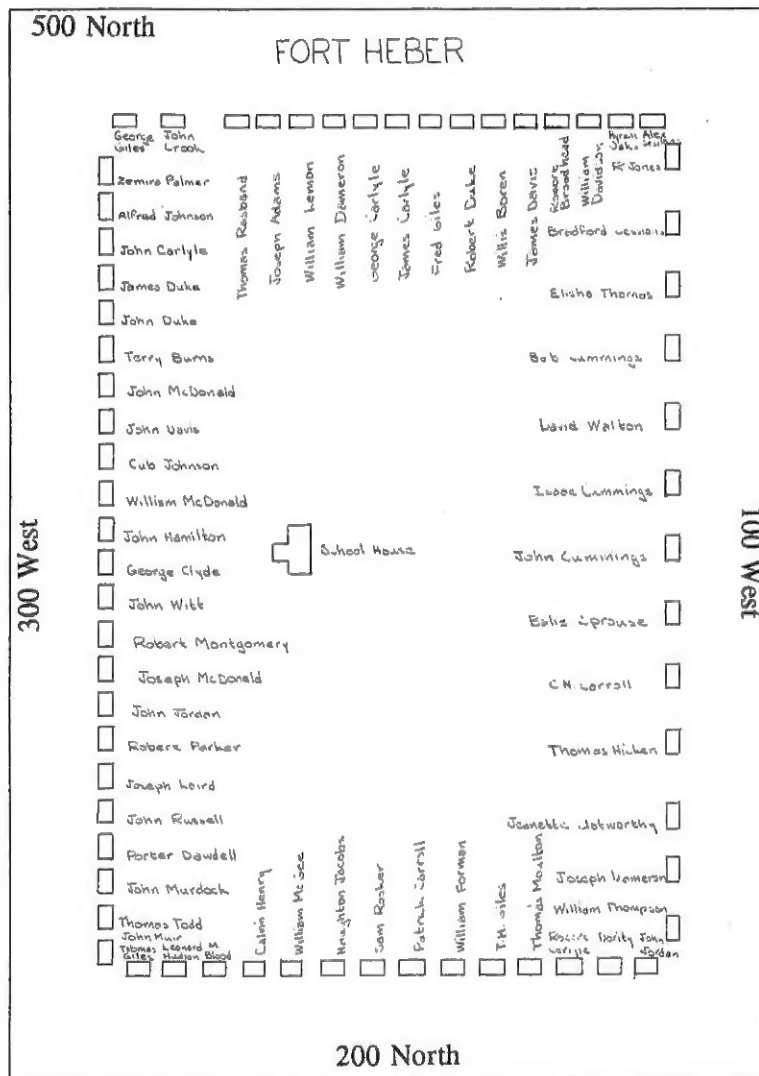
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Old Fort Heber showing the locations of the families who built their homes there in 1859.

The area for the fort was 80 rods (square) lying between what is now First West and Third West Streets and 2nd North and 5th North Streets.

Within that fort area the company of men built their houses close together, with sufficient openings to let their stock in and out. The houses were built with green cottonwood logs that were cut on the river bottoms.



Dirt floors, dirt roofs and mud packed between the logs were the order of the day.

When the crops were planted and the log huts prepared, the men left the valley and went back to Provo where happy families greeted them with shouts of "How's the weather?" and "When are we going?"

With wives, children, cows, pigs, chickens and all their earthly possessions packed, the original company started out and were joined by others who were cheered by the reports of a good summer and plenty of farming land and irrigation water. Some of the additional families who came were Thomas H. Giles, John Giles, Hiram Oaks and George Carlile.

During that first summer, some 1,000 bushels of grain were raised in the valley. Though some of the wheat crop was injured by early frost, it could still be made into flour and the settlers rejoiced for the blessings of the harvest. Because the nearest gristmill was in Provo and a four-days' journey away, many of the people ground flour in small hand mills or boiled the wheat and ate it whole with milk.

With the crops in and summer on the wane, dreary winter again loomed up before the people. Farming efforts had been to raise wheat and other crops to sustain human life, and so before winter came it was necessary to cut meadow hay and swamp grass for cattle wherever it could be found. All of it had to be cut by hand with a scythe, which proved to be the hardest work of the summer.

Many of the men who had come to the valley during the summer and raised their crops decided that they would return to Provo for the winter rather than provide hay for their cattle and be shut out from the rest of the world for the long winter months.

However, 18 families had cast their lot with Provo Valley and through the winter they stayed. These families, according to the journal of John Crook, were Thomas Rasband, John Crook, Charles N. Carroll, John Jordan, Alexander Sessions, Bradford Sessions, Hiram Oaks, John Lee, Richard Jones, James Davis, William Davidson, James Laird, John Sessions, Elisha Thomas, James Carlile and George Carlile. Jane Clotworthy and Elizabeth Carlile were both widows. Charles C. Thomas, unmarried, lived with his brother Elisha. No record is made of the exact number of women and children.

The first birth among the settlers in the valley occurred in November. The child, a daughter of William Davidson and his wife, Ellen, was named Timpanogos, the Indian name for the valley and the prominent mountain that lay at the west.

For those who remained, the first winter in the valley was a long and dreary one. The snow fell early and was several feet deep. For nearly four months they were without communication from the rest of the world.

At Christmas time, however, a group of young people from Provo braved the weather and came through the canyon by sleigh and spent the holiday season with the families in the valley. They soon left and no one else came into the valley until the snows melted.

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Their being shut out from the rest of the world did not mean that the settlers spent the winter days and nights with long faces and twiddling thumbs. Quite the opposite. Meeting in the various log homes, they held Church meetings each Sabbath day and during the week gathered for singing, dancing and dramatics.

As the Spring of 1860 neared they hopefully looked for signs that winter was leaving and warm weather was on its way. By the end of March when the snow was still as deep as ever and no signs of Spring were evident, some began to get discouraged. It was finally determined that all would meet at the home of Thomas Rasband where a meeting would be held and the help of the Lord sought.

Those present reported that during the meeting they prayed sincerely and earnestly that the Lord would cause the snow to melt and Spring to come so that their famished oxen and cows might get grass to eat and that they could plant their crops and be in touch again with their friends in the lower valleys.

Before the meeting was dismissed there was water dripping from the eaves of the house and Spring was born in the valley.

1st Miracle